

As this pamphlet may reach some persons not familiar with the position of the writer, it is proper to say, that Mr. BLAIR was the editor of the *Washington Globe*, during the administration of GENERAL JACKSON, the trusted friend of that great man, and of the first men of the Democratic Party. Since then, he has resided in Maryland, taking no part in political strife, but the present crisis is such as to bring him forth from his retirement.

17.

LETTER  
OF  
FRANCIS P. BLAIR, ESQ.  
TO THE  
REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION  
OF  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

REPUBLICAN ROOMS, WASHINGTON,  
December 10, 1855.

The annexed letter from Francis P. Blair, Esq., was presented and read at the regular meeting of the Republican Association of this city, Saturday evening, the 8th instant, and the following resolutions were unanimously adopted, and also one urging Mr. Blair to reconsider his determination to decline the Presidency of the Association.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Association be presented to Francis P. Blair, Esq., for his able and highly satisfactory letter, showing that the present Administration has departed entirely from the Jeffersonian principles relative to the government of the Territories of the United States, and has become but little better than a working model of John C. Calhoun's Nullification and Disunion doctrines.

*Resolved*, That a copy of the letter and resolutions be offered the city papers for publication, and be issued in pamphlet form for general circulation, to strengthen the hands of Republicans, to unite all discordant opinions, and induce good men of all parties to use their influence to bring this Government back to its original principles of Freedom, and to stand upon the issues therein presented, in the next Presidential election.

LEWIS CLEPHANE, *Secretary*.

SILVER SPRING, MD., Dec. 1, 1855.

GENTLEMEN: Having relinquished political employment, and, to avoid encountering again its anxieties, addicted myself to country life, I am constrained to decline your invitation to join

the Republican Association of Washington City, although tempted by the honor of becoming its presiding officer. Yet I feel it my duty to say, that in the main I concur in the aims of the Association. To exclude Slavery from the Territories of the United States, and to rebuke the violation of the Compromises, which were made to stand as covenants between the Slave and Free States to effect that exclusion, are, in my opinion, the most important movements which have engaged the public mind since the Revolution.

The extension of Slavery over the new Territories would prove fatal to their prosperity; but the greatest calamity to be apprehended from it, is the destruction of the Confederacy, on which the welfare of the whole country reposes. Every conquest of this element of discord, which has so often threatened the dissolution of the Union, increases the danger. Every surrender of the Free States invites invasion.

The cause which your organization is intended to promote may well draw to its support men of all parties. Differences on questions of policy, of constitutional construction, of modes of administration, may well be merged, to unite men who believe that nothing but concert of action on the part of those who would arrest the spread of Slavery, can resist the power of the combination now embodied to make it embrace the Continent from ocean to ocean.

The repealing clause of the Kansas Bill is predicated on the nullity of the clause in the Constitution which gives Congress the power "to make regulations respecting the Territories" of the United States. Yet nothing is clearer in the history of our Government, than that this phrase, giving power to Congress "to make regulations respecting the Territories," was meant to give it the power to exclude Slavery from them.

Mr. Jefferson's resolutions of 1784, declaring "*that there shall be neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude in any of the States*" laid off in the Western Territory, was subsequently renewed in the Congress of 1785, which added, "*that this regulation shall be an article of compact;*" and it was so voted unanimously by the delegations of eight States out of twelve.

It was passed by the unanimous votes of all the States by the Congress of 1787, which sat contemporaneously with the Con-

vention forming the Constitution, and that Constitution gave Congress the power "*to make regulations respecting the Territories,*" and moreover affirmed the validity of "*the engagements entered into before the adoption of the Constitution,*" by the Confederation—one of which engagements was that made by the regulation excluding Slavery from the Territories. Thus the Congress of the Confederation and the Convention framing the Constitution united in giving a double sanction to the exclusion.

The first exerted the power of enacting Mr. Jefferson's interdiction of Slavery in the Territories *then held* by the United States, to which it had previously given an impressive sanction by adding, "this regulation shall be an article of compact," &c.; and the Convention guaranteed this "engagement," entered into under the Confederation, by declaring it "valid," and employed the same terms, "*regulation of the Territories,*" to transmit the power here exerted to future Congresses. In the face of this history, and the letter of the Constitution granting the power to make whatever regulations it deemed fit respecting the Territories of the United States, the authors of the Kansas and Nebraska Bill deny the constitutionality of all the regulations which exclude Slavery from the Territories, and set at naught all the precedents that confirm them, which have followed in uninterrupted succession, from the foundation of the Government.

That other clause in the Constitution, empowering Congress to pass laws to prevent the "migration or importation" of slaves after 1808, shows the fixed purpose of the founders of our Union to limit the increase of this evil. The consequence was an inhibition, which prevents a South Carolina planter, who has slaves in Cuba, from bringing them to his home plantation; and to remove this obstruction to the increase of Slavery within the Union, and open Africa to supply the demand made by the new act, the Northern nullifiers are already called on by their Southern allies to lend their aid; and certainly those who embrace Mr. Calhoun's doctrine, as stated by Mr. Douglas, that "every citizen has an inalienable right to move into any of the Territories with his property, of whatever kind or description," the Constitution and Compromises notwithstanding, can hardly refuse it. It was on the annexation of the Mexican Territories that

Mr. Calhoun asserted this principle, to unsettle the fixed policy of the Nation, beginning with the era of the Declaration of Independence ; and he applied it alike to the Compromises of 1820 and 1850. Mr. Douglas thus sums up the position taken, and the result :

“Under this section, *as in the case of the Mexican law in New Mexico and Utah*, it is a disputed point whether Slavery is prohibited in the Nebraska country by valid enactment. The decision of this question involves the constitutional power of Congress to pass laws prescribing and regulating the domestic institutions of the various Territories of the Union. In the opinion of those eminent statesmen who hold that Congress is invested with no rightful authority to legislate upon the subject of Slavery in the Territories, the eighth section of the act preparatory to the admission of Missouri is null and void, while the prevailing sentiment in a large portion of the Union sustains the doctrine that the Constitution of the United States secures to every citizen an *inalienable right* to move into any of the Territories with his property, of whatever kind and description, and to hold and enjoy the same under the sanction of law. Your committee do not feel themselves called upon to enter into the discussion of these controverted questions. They involve the same grave issues which produced the agitation, the sectional strife, and the fearful struggle of 1850.”

From this it appears that the Compromises of 1820 and 1850 involved the question of the validity of the law of Mexico excluding Slavery from the newly-ceded Mexican Territory, and the law of our own Congress excluding it from that north of the line of 36° 30'. Mr. Douglas's Committee Report recommended that as

“Congress deemed it wise and prudent to refrain from deciding the matters in controversy then; *either by affirming or repealing the Mexican laws, or by an act declaratory of the true intent of the Constitution*, and the extent of the protection afforded by it to slave property in the Territories, so your committee are not prepared now to recommend a departure from the course pursued on that memorable occasion, either by affirming or repealing the eighth section of the Missouri act, or by any act declaratory of the meaning of the Constitution in respect to the legal points in dispute.”

These passages are quoted to show that the issues made by Mr. Calhoun, as to the constitutionality of the two Compromises of 1820 and 1850, were expressly left open for judicial decision, by the committee, who nevertheless swept away, by a

clause subsequently added to their bill, not only the Missouri Compromise of 1820, but also the Compromise of 1850, which left untouched the Mexican laws prohibiting Slavery in the ceded Territories, and which Webster, Clay, Benton, and all the leading lights of the Senate, (with the exception of Mr. Calhoun,) pronounced valid, and an effectual restriction.

This repeal was the adoption of Mr. Calhoun's nullifying doctrine *in extenso*. The power of Congress to make laws excluding Slavery forever from its Territories, *as such*, was denied, and all the Territories were opened to Slavery, on the ground of the "*inalienable right*" of every citizen "to move into *any of the Territories with his property, of whatever kind or description*;" and the law of *squatter sovereignty* was superadded, and substituted for the sovereignty of the United States over the public domain. Thus fell, at the dictation of Mr. Atchison, supported by the coalition effected between the Whigs and Democrats of the South, under the pressure and through the intrigues of the Nullifiers, Mr. Jefferson's noble principle, endeared to the country both for its moral grandeur and political wisdom. It is the first thought uttered in the Declaration of Independence; and to the denunciation of the King of Great Britain for the crime of bringing Slavery to our shores, the original draft adds, as the deepest aggravation, that "*he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restrain this execrable commerce.*"

The first legislative attempt to restrain the progress of the mischief which the King of Great Britain visited upon this country, was Mr. Jefferson's resolution excluding Slavery from the Territory of the United States in 1784—the next was that introduced by Rufus King, in 1785—the third, that of Nathan Dane, in 1787—all receiving the vote of two-thirds of the States of the Confederacy, and the last the unanimous vote.

The fourth movement was that of the Convention, in the Constitution itself, providing against the importation of slaves after 1808, declaring the binding validity of the engagements entered into by the Congress of the Confederacy on the Government of the United States, to exclude it from the Territory, and securing to the new Government the power of making similar provisions for future acquisitions of Territory. The fifth regula-

tion to restrain the progress of Slavery was that of the Compromise of 1820—the sixth, that of 1850. It is remarkable, that although these great measures had their origin with Democratic leaders, Federal and Whig leaders of greatest renown united in their support. The constitutional provisions on the subject had the unanimous suffrage of all the illustrious men in the Convention who framed the Constitution of the United States; and from the silence on the subject in the State Conventions called to ratify the Constitution, it may well be presumed that these also were unanimous in their approval of what had been done under the Confederacy and in the new Constitution to restrain the introduction and limit the extension of Slavery. And may not men of all parties now unite to restore, what the patriots of all parties, during the first seventy years of our Government, contributed to establish?

The work of restoration is simple and easy, if the men who abhor the late innovation on the long-settled policy of the nation can be induced to relinquish petty differences on transitory topics, and give their united voice, in the next Presidential election, for some man, whose capacity, fidelity, and courage, can be relied upon to oppose the issue which the present Administration has made to control it. The contest has grown out of Presidential aspirations. The decision of the People at the polls, in choosing a Chief Magistrate, will end it. Senators will easily comply, when the Nation's demand is backed by the existing Presidential power and patronage, and hopes of the future succession, which always animate the leading members of the body.

The Administration has staked itself on the support of the party of privilege—of class interest—which makes it a unit. It confides in the success which has crowned the oligarchy everywhere in the Old World, and secured its triumphs on the maxim, "*Divide and conquer.*" The Whigs and Democrats of the South are a combination, to carry into the next Presidency some candidate absolute in maintaining the repealing clause of the Kansas Bill, which nullifies the principles of the Ordinance, the provisions of the Constitution made to give them effect, and all the Compromises which have been made in pursuance of them, with the sanction of all sections of the Union. If the majority favorable to the policy built up with our Government will unite,

accept the issue tendered by the Administration, and make THE REPEAL OF THE REPEALING CLAUSE OF THE KANSAS ACT paramount in the impending contest for the Presidency, all will be restored that has been lost to free institutions, by opening the Territories, North and South, to Slavery. The Compromises of 1820 and 1850 being restored, there will not be an inch of the territory of the United States, once exempt from Slavery, on which it can legally intrude; and Mr. Atchison's attempt by an armed force to carry out the nullification plotted of the caucus which gave birth to the Kansas Bill, will, like the attempt of his prototype, Mr. Calhoun, to give effect to South Carolina nullification, be paralyzed by the frown of an indignant nation, made potent by an honest and firm Executive.

And there will end the career of those gentlemen who arrogate to themselves the exclusive tutelage of the Democracy of the country, as ended that of Mr. Calhoun and his proselytes, who took the peculiar charge of the "*State Rights*" party. They sunk, under the universal conviction that their zeal for State Rights was an ardent passion to reach political power, at the hazard of extinguishing in the blood of the people the wise and free institutions it had cost so much to establish.

Our innovating Democrats, who put under foot the representative principle; who violate the known will of their constituents; who scorn their instructions to redress the wrong they have committed; who reply to the suffrages that condemn their conduct, that they are not Democratic suffrages; who, in the plenitude of their infallibility, read out of the Democratic party, Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, because they will not submit to the will of these, their Representatives; who have set up a test which must forever exclude Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont; who have bartered away the rights secured to them all by compacts—will soon learn that Democracy does not reside in the organization of intriguers, but in the mass of the people.

It is the glory of our great Republic, that its Democracy springs up from the soil and flourishes in the fresh air of our wide-spread country; and that its rich harvests, imparting health, strength, and spirit, to our whole system, are gathered

annually at the polls. The Democracy which is bred in caucuses and Cabinets is a sort of hot-bed species—a delicacy suited to the taste of epicurean politicians, whose appetites are their principles. Incumbents and expectants of offices and dignities claim a sort of patent right in the machine of Government to create a Democracy adapted to their purposes. Their innovations in the machinery are contrivances to renew their privileges for new terms, and the people are the subjects who are to be used up in it—to pay tribute for this privilege, and take pride in the skill of the operators.

The telegraph wires and the Cincinnati Convention are to bring all the masterly combinations of the Administration in contact with the masses at the appointed time. But, will the wires work? Undoubtedly the people, far and wide, will have their instructions from the operators; but the response will probably be a thunderbolt to those who have violated their rights, spurned their remonstrances, and, as a consequence, have arrayed brothers from the different sections of the Union to shed each others' blood, in civil war, on the plains of Kansas.

Yours, respectfully,

F. P. BLAIR.

To MESSRS. DANIEL R. GOODLOE and LEWIS CLEPHANE,  
*Corresponding Com. Rep. Assoc'n, Washington City.*

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L. CLEPHANE,

*Secretary of the Republican Association, Washington, D. C.*